

Table 6 (page 45): please amend the text between lines 4 and 10 to delete "production" and substitute --produced-- therefor.

Table 7 (page 47): in line 1 change "rebonucleotide" to --ribonucleotide--.

In the claims:

Please amend claim 45 as follows by adding --significantly--:

E5 45. (amended) A method for reducing the number of bacteria in a food item for animals so that the number of bacteria in the food item treated by said method is at least 10^3 -fold lower at about 3-6 days after treatment than in an untreated control food item, said method comprising applying about 200 μg of β -hydroxypropionaldehyde per gram of food item to said food item, said method reducing the number of bacteria significantly more than does treatment with 250 mM glycerol or glyceraldehyde.

Please replace claims 41-44 as follows by new claims 46-49:

Please replace claim 41 by new claim 46, in which the last phrase and the word "storage" have been deleted, as follows:

E6 46. A method for reducing the number of bacteria in a food item for animals so that the number of bacteria in the food item is reduced at least 10^2 -fold in the treated food item by about 4 days after treatment as compared with an untreated control food item after 4 days, comprising:

(a) adding a precursor substance to said food item, said precursor substance

- Lactobacillus reuteri being about 10-fold less than the number of said non-Lactobacillus reuteri bacteria present prior to said treatment; and
- (d) providing anaerobic conditions for said cells of Lactobacillus reuteri.

Please replace claim 43 with new claim 48 to delete "cells of said strain" and reword the amount language similar to the way suggested by the Examiner, as follows:

48. A method for providing a probiotic to the gastrointestinal tract of an animal, comprising selecting a Lactobacillus reuteri strain which produces β -hydroxypropionaldehyde as a detectable end-product under anaerobic conditions and in the presence of glycerol or glyceraldehyde; and feeding the animal an amount of Lactobacillus reuteri [in an amount] sufficient to colonize the gastrointestinal tract of said animal.

Please replace claim 44 with new claim 49, to make it depend from claim 48, as follows:

49. A method according to claim 48, wherein a substance selected from the group consisting of glycerol and glyceraldehyde in a concentration of at least 20 mM is co-present in the gastrointestinal tract of the animal with the Lactobacillus reuteri cells.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments to the claims and the remarks set out below.

The specification has been amended to correct typographic errors. All specification